



**Alabama Board of Nursing
Implementation Framework for CNS Independent Contract
for Nursing Services under 610-X-9-.10(2)**

CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST

A Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) is a registered nurse, who has graduate level nursing preparation, including supervised practice, at the master's or doctoral level as a CNS. They are clinical experts in evidence-based nursing practice within a specialty area, treating and managing the health concerns of patients and populations as evidenced by national certification as a CNS. A clinical nurse specialist may perform permitted independent nursing services as an independent contractor.

All nursing services provided via an independent contract must be consistent with the CNS scope of practice, the patient population, national certification, and congruent with Alabama law.

Limitations:

No prescriptive authority

No collaborative practice

May not perform functions reserved by statute and rule for CRNPs or CNMs [Ala. Code § 34-21-81(4)(d) and Chapter 5 of the Alabama Board of Nursing Administrative Code]

Practice Authority:

The list below is informative and not exhaustive, as many of the basic skills listed below can be performed by a registered nurse (RN). All independent contracts for nursing services of the CNS are guided and directed pursuant to established policies, guidelines, standing orders, protocols, and/or standardized procedures approved through the medical executive committee (which includes at least one physician licensed in Alabama) of (1) a licensed healthcare facility, (2) a contracting employer, or (3) a contracting physician.

Duties allowed under an independent contract include, but are not limited to, the following:

A. Arranging inpatient admissions, referrals, transfers, and discharges; performing rounds and recording appropriate patient progress notes; compiling detailed narrative and case summaries; and completing forms pertinent to patients' medical records for which the CNS has signature authority.

B. Performing and documenting complete, detailed, and accurate health histories; reviewing patient records; developing comprehensive medical and nursing status reports; and ordering laboratory, radiological, and diagnostic studies, as appropriate for complaint, age, race, sex, and physical condition of the patient and controlling standards of care.

C. Performing comprehensive physical examinations and assessments and documenting same in the medical record.

D. Formulating nursing diagnoses and instituting therapy or referrals of patients to appropriate healthcare physician(s), facility(ies), and/or agency(ies); and other resources of the community or physicians.

E. Independent prescribing is not allowed. However, a standardized procedure or approved medical protocol (standing order) may include a therapeutic regimen, including implementing physician-approved predetermined protocol-driven legend drugs, medical devices, nutrition, and supportive services in accordance with established protocols and institutional policies, as directed by the physician or contractor.

F. Interpreting and analyzing patient data and results of laboratory and diagnostic tests and notifying physician, as indicated.

G. Providing instructions and guidance regarding healthcare and healthcare promotion to patients, families, and significant others.

H. Functioning as a nursing expert.

I. Leading the advancement of nursing practice (nursing/nursing practice sphere).

J. Identifying opportunities for and leading organizational and system change.

K. Performing health assessment, screening and health promotion, risk reduction, and preventative care.

NOTE: The CNS shall have on file documented training, education, and competency validation for all skills/procedures/protocols agreed upon and approved by the facility or contract employer, which are not limited to the CNS Practice and Independent Contract. Other skills/procedures are allowable through the standardized procedure process. All standing orders/medical protocols and standardized procedures implemented by a CNS must be signed by a physician licensed in Alabama.